

BRITISH MYRIAPOD

GROUP, NEWSLETTER No. 13

Sept. 1991

Editor: Dick Jones

BRACHYCHAETUEMA YET AGAIN

Well here we are again, no sooner do I finish one than it's time to start on another. Actually I've got the editor syndrome again, pass me the green eyeshield. Things have been pottering along as usual with contributions from Paul Lee, Steve Gregory, Paul Richards, Charles Rawcliffe, G. B. Corbet and Arthur Chater, not to mention the results of the field weekend. There has been a good response from Staffs too with Craig Slawson sending in the results of his labours, (see Tony Barber below). If you have sent me anything and not heard from me please be patient, I'll get back to you eventually. Also, don't send any more letters etc. to the Museum as I don't work there any more, I finally got pensioned off! The parting was quite amicable and long over due.

In April I went to Ireland and added quite a few new squares in the south-west as well as *Chordeuma proximum* and *Henia brevis* to the Irish list. I got back to find that Dave Bilton had been there too, recording such goodies as *Polyxenus lagurus* and *Tachypodoiulus niger*! This just shows how little the Irish fauna is known.

The other little known area is north Scotland. A few weeks ago we set off to do, amongst other things, the north-west. We cut our holiday short as the weather was awful but not before we had sampled the invertebrates. I now see why it is little known. We had to work very hard for very few species. Still, there were some surprises, *Lamyctes fulvicornis* for a start at about eight sites; Tony writes about this species below. There were mainly centipedes such as *Haplophilus subterraneus* or *Necrophloeophagus flavus* found well north of their known distribution at Inverewe, but what do I make of a *Brachychaeteuma* from Glasgow with no eyes at all!

My overwhelming memory of Dorset was wet and windy and a trifle cold. We turned up some good things between us but the weather could have been better and then perhaps my predictions, and Andy Keay's, might have come true. Still we found *Henia vesuviana*, *Cryptops parisi* and *C. anomolans* which was good and Dave Bilton found *Chordeuma proximum*. Perhaps the most interesting find was at Leeson House where *Brachychaeteuma melanops* was abundant in the grounds beneath large blocks of limestone bordering the drive. It was first found by Bagnall near here in 1918, seventy-three years ago.

Our thanks go to Jon Delf for arranging an interesting weekend. The next will be in the Forest of Dean and is being arranged by Keith Alexander.

BISG/BMG FIELD MEETING 1992

Next year's meeting will be held from 23rd to 26th April at Littledean House Hotel, Littledean, Cinderford, Gloucestershire (Grid Ref. S0668136). The hotel specialises in catering for field groups and has recently been used by the British Mycological Society and the British Arachnological Society. The building is very rambling and somewhat run-down! We will be using twin and single bedded rooms which have wash basins and heating. The "laboratory" will be their Games Room which has benches around the walls and electric sockets. It is rather spartan but adequate for our purposes. The cost is likely to be about £25 per head per day. The large garden and car park offer good hunting grounds. Oh yes, and the hotel is fully licensed!

Although based in the Royal Forest of Dean, the intention is to spread our recording efforts into the Wye Valley, Gwent and Herefordshire. The Dean is where *Chordeuma proximum* was first discovered in Britain, and has recently produced Gloucestershire's first records of *Craspedosoma rawlinsii* and *Armadillidium pulchellum*, the latter apparently lives in rotting timber here!
Keith Alexander

(There followed a brief sentence about "outlandish predictions from the Newsletter Editor" but I couldn't quite follow it so I left it out. I can't think what he meant. Ed)

Please can you complete the enclosed booking form by 31st January 1992 and return it to Keith. Please keep a copy of your form so that you know what you have booked. This helps to avoid confusion at the meeting.

MILLIPEDES FOR LUNCH?

In Holyrood Park, in Edinburgh, on a road known as the Queen's Drive, is a retaining wall built of rough stones, mortared, and about six feet high. On an 85 yard stretch there are twelve outlet holes, presumably for drainage, but quite dry. These are about eye-level, i.e. about five above ground. During the afternoon of 25th June 1991 I was searching the wall and had already noted specimens of *Ommatoiulus sabulosus* and *Tachypodoiulus niger* in the open. There had been rain so the likelihood of dessication was remote.

In one of the apertures already mentioned I saw spiders' webs, on the upper surface, caught amongst which were many dried, white segments of millipedes (and a few pieces of isopods). The small cylinders looked like miniature "Saint Cuthbert's Beads".

Out of the twelve webs there were seven showing very obvious remains and from one I was able to extract the empty body of a flatback.
(*Polydesmus angustus* ♀ REJ)

The obvious conclusion would be that there is a spider that feeds on millipedes, but the obvious is something to be wary of. I wonder if anyone has any knowledge which would either support or refute my idea?

C. P. Rawcliffe

VICE-COUNTY DISTRIBUTION: MILLIPEDES

Species	Vice-counties	Finders
<i>Archiboreoiulus pallidus</i>	77	REJ
<i>Blaniulus guttulatus</i>	H2 H12	REJ REJ
<i>Boreoiulus tenuis</i>	39	Varty-Smith 1918
<i>Brachychaeteuma bagnalli</i>	39	I. J. Hopkins
<i>B. bradeae</i>	25 39	P. Lee I. J. Hopkins
<i>Brachydesmus superus</i>	H1 H2 H2 H5	REJ REJ REJ REJ
<i>Brachyiulus pusillus</i>	H5 39	REJ G. C. Slawson
<i>Chordeuma proximum</i>	H1 9	REJ D. T. Bilton
<i>Craspedosoma rawlinsii</i>	39	S. Barnes
<i>Cylindroiulus britannicus</i>	H2 80 106	D. T. Bilton C. P. Rawcliffe G. B. Corbet
<i>Cylindroiulus caeruleocinctus</i>	9	A. D. Barber C. P. Rawcliffe
<i>Cylindroiulus latestriatus</i>	H1 39	REJ G. C. Slawson
<i>Cylindroiulus londinensis</i>	39	E. Brown 1863!
<i>Macrosternodesmus palicola</i>	H1 H2 9 61	REJ REJ C. P. Richards A. Norris
<i>Melogona scutellare</i>	39	I. J. Hopkins
<i>Nemasoma varicorne</i>	H2	D. T. Bilton
<i>Ophiodesmus albonanus</i>	H2 46 25 14	REJ A. O. Chater P. Lee W. G. Teagle
<i>Ophiulus pilosus</i>	H5 105 106	REJ REJ G. B. Corbet
<i>Polydesmus angustus</i>	H2	REJ
<i>Polydesmus denticulatus</i>	105	REJ
<i>Polydesmus gallicus</i>	H3 H5 39	REJ REJ S. Barnes
<i>Polydesmus inconstans</i>	9 39	C. P. Rawcliffe J. R. B. Masefield 1918
<i>Polyxenus lagurus</i>	H2 39	D. T. Bilton E. Brown 1863!
<i>Proteroiulus fuscus</i>	95	G. B. Corbet
<i>Stygioglomeris crinita</i>	70	D. T. Bilton
<i>Tachypodoiulus niger</i>	H2 77	D. T. Bilton REJ

Please update lists given in PRELIMINARY ATLAS 1988.

DORSET MILLIPEDES

	30							31		40		41		
	58	68	87	88	89	97	98	60	70	71	07	08	09	00
<i>Blaniulus guttulatus</i>	■			■								■		
<i>Brachychaeteuma melanops</i>											■	■		
<i>Brachydesmus superus</i>		■		■		■	■			■	■	■		
<i>Brachyiulus pusillus</i>				■								■		
<i>Chordeuma proximum</i>												■		
<i>Cylindroiulus britannicus</i>												■		
<i>C. caeruleocinctus</i>	■						■					■		
<i>C. latestriatus</i>							■					■		
<i>C. punctatus</i>		■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■		■	■	■
<i>Glomeris marginata</i>		■			■	■	■		■			■	■	
<i>Julus scandinavus</i>				■			■					■		
<i>Macrosternodesmus palicola</i>												■		
<i>Nanogona polydesmoides</i>							■				■	■		
<i>Nemasoma varicorne</i>				■			■	■				■		
<i>Ophiodesmus albonanus</i>	■						■					■		
<i>Ophiulus pilosus</i>				■		■	■					■		
<i>Polydesmus angustus</i>				■			■				■	■		
<i>P. gallicus</i>						■	■		■		■			
<i>P. inconstans</i>							■							
<i>Polyxenus lagurus</i>										■		■		
<i>Proteroiulus fuscus</i>		■	■	■	■	■	■	■		■		■	■	■
<i>Tachypodoiulus niger</i>	■	■		■	■		■	■	■	■	■	■		

DORSET CENTIPEDES

	30							31		40		41			
	49	58	68	87	88	89	97	98	60	70	71	07	08	09	00
GEOPHILOMORPHA															
<i>Haplophilus subterraneus</i>	■	■	■	■	■		■	■				■	■	■	
<i>Schendyla nemorensis</i>		■	■			■		■		■	■	■	■		■
<i>Henia vesuviana</i>		■										■	■		■
<i>Strigamia crassipes</i>											■	■			
<i>S. accuminata</i>					■										
<i>S. maritima</i>				■			■	■				■	■		
<i>Geophilus carpophagus</i>			■		■		■	■			■		■	■	
<i>G. electricus</i>		■													
<i>G. insculptus</i>			■												
<i>Necrophloeophagus flavus</i>		■			■		■	■				■			
<i>Brachygeophilus truncorum</i>		■			■			■	■						■
SCOLOPENDROMORPHA															
<i>Cryptops anomalans</i>														■	
<i>C. hortensis</i>	■	■	■	■	■			■				■	■	■	
<i>C. parisi</i>												■			
LITHOBIOMORPHA															
<i>Lithobius variegatus</i>	■	■	■		■		■	■				■	■	■	
<i>L. forficatus</i>	■	■	■	■	■		■	■	■	■		■	■		
<i>L. melanops</i>		■					■	■		■		■	■		■
<i>L. borealis</i>			■		■			■	■				■		
<i>L. calcaratus</i>		■						■							
<i>L. crassipes</i>					■					■					
<i>L. microps</i>	■	■	■		■		■	■				■	■	■	

DORSET CENTIPEDES 1991

Dorset was one of the less well known south coast counties for centipedes with odd records having been made over the years, so the meeting at Leeson House was a valuable opportunity to build up a more complete picture. In the last issue of the Newsletter some 19 species were named for Dorset. One of these was the old record of *Schendyla zonalis* by R. S. Bagnall (1935) for which no subsequent British record exists and whose status must for the present remain unclear.

A total of 21 species was collected during the meeting (see the table). Not collected were *Geophilus osquidatum*, *Lithobius macilentus* and *L. pilicornis* but the five additional species bring the total for Dorset (excluding *S. zonalis*) to 23, a fairly typical number for a southern county. No doubt collecting more intensively will reveal other species, e.g. *Lamyctes fulvicornis* is predictable but is autumnal; some more synanthropes such as *Henia brevis* and *Brachyschendyla dentata* could be found and also maritime species like *Schendyla peyerimhoffi* and *Geophilus fucorum*.

Haplophilus subterraneus showed itself to be a common geophilomorph, reflecting the pattern elsewhere in the south-west, whilst *Schendyla nemorensis* was also common along with *Geophilus carpophagus*. *Henia vesuviana* was also widespread, reflecting its south coast distribution, as were *Necrophloeophagus flavus* and *Brachygeophilus truncorum*. Additions to the Dorset fauna were the widespread British species *Geophilus electricus*, *G. insculptus* and *Strigamia accuminata*. *Cryptops hortensis* was widespread and the two other *Cryptops* species also turned up, *C. parisi* at Townsend Reserve and in Swanage and *C. anomalans* found by David Bilton from the Swanage cliffs.

Of the Lithobiids, *Lithobius variegatus* and *L. forficatus* were predictably common and *L. microps* was the commonest small Lithobiid in the sites examined. *L. borealis* was recorded from five 10Km squares whilst *L. crassipes* was found in two. This latter species tends to disappear as one moves into the south-west. *L. melanops* was, as might be expected, widespread when collections included both synanthropic and maritime sites.

Only six species were found in Leeson House grounds, perhaps no one was going on those early morning forays this year! (No comment Ed.) There are still areas of Dorset and Somerset very poorly recorded so anyone going on holiday or just visiting that area could usefully add to our knowledge.

Tony Barber

Records were received from the following:- J. P. Richards, C. P. Rawcliffe, K. Alexander, P. Lee, D. T. Bilton, S. J. Gregory, J. Lewis, J. Bratton, J. Daws, Tony Barber and R. E. J.

FAREWELL *GLOMERIS MARGINATA*

After a long think about it and having seen the area I have deleted *Glomeris marginata* from vice county 105. I am willing to reinstate it, if the request comes with a specimen, but I think it has been included in error.

PLEASE UPDATE THE LIST IN YOUR MILLEPEDE ATLAS 1988

STAFFORDSHIRE MYRIAPODS

Staffs was one of the counties from which numbers of records were made in the 19th and early 20th Century by J. C. Varty-Smith and others. *Glomeris marginata*, *Ommatoiulus sabulosus*, *Haplophilus subterraneus*, *Necrophloeophagus flavus* and *Lithobius forficatus* were all recorded "before 1844" whilst *Polyxenus lagurus*, *Cylindroiulus londinensis* s.l. (? = *C. caeruleocinctus*), *Polydesmus angustus* and *L. variegatus* are recorded in 1863. A further 15 species date from 1915-1918 including *Allajulus nitidus*.

In recent years groups from Manchester have made sorties to the Peak District and have recorded from Staffs as well as Derbyshire, but no recent published list exists.

We now have two workers collecting in the area and contributing records, Craig Slawson of Stoke-on-Trent who is the area spider recorder and Adrian Turner of Wolverhampton. It looks as if the total species for the vice county at present are 27 millipedes and 19 centipedes but some of the records are old. For instance, has *Polyxenus* been found since 1900? Any contributions or comments would be welcome.

Tony Barber

LAMYCTES SEASON AGAIN

Lamyctes fulvicornis is markedly seasonal and is most likely to be found in late summer and autumn so, if you have not found many records of it, now may be the time to look. If you want an unusual location for it and you live in an appropriate area try pitfalling in river bank shingle.

The tiny relative, *Lamyctinus coeculus* (which has no eyes at all) has been found in Denmark, Sweden, Finland, France and Italy in greenhouses. Could it be present in Britain? It is only 3.5 - 5.0mm long and could easily be overlooked. Even if you don't find this you may turn up other interesting species like Charles Rawcliffe did in Edinburgh, *Lithobius lapidicola*, *Lamyctes africana* etc.

Tony Barber

BULLETIN OF THE BRITISH MYRIAPOD GROUP

Volume 7, November 1990 is still on sale from Tony Barber, price £4.50. (£5.00. overseas).

Volume 8 looks very thin at the moment and contributions are urgently needed. Tony also says that he has numbers 2-5 still in stock and he has photocopies available of the first volume which was separated from subsequent editions by several years. Please contact ADB for details, address below.

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NEXT BMG NEWSLETTER

Material for inclusion in the next Newsletter should reach R. E. Jones by the end of February. Material should preferably be typed but floppy discs using Locoscript 1 or 2 for Amstrad 8000 series PCWs are especially acceptable as they save me extra typing.